



# **ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

**BY  
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## OVERVIEW

Ten years after it was established, the Government of Nunavut undertook to review the effectiveness of its programs and services by seeking the views of Nunavummiut. In May 2009, it commissioned North Sky Consulting (NSC) to ask the public and government staff some basic questions: What is going right? What is going wrong and should be stopped? and, What should be improved?

NSC began visiting communities in June to hold public meetings, conduct interviews, and host radio phone-in shows. Along with an extensive on-line survey and other methods, NSC gathered as much of a candid expression of the public's perceptions of government as it could in a fairly short timeframe. By early September, twenty five (25) communities had been visited and more than 2,100 people had participated.

People were encouraged to speak frankly and they did. They commented on all facets of the government's responsibilities as it affected their families, their communities, and the entire territory. They spoke passionately about everything from the delivery of health services to quality of education, and from the high cost of living throughout the territory to the operational challenges within the GN.

Major themes emerged. Much was said about the government's vision and the leadership it provides as well as the very specific effects it has on the lives of people throughout the territory. Nunavummiut spoke clearly about what they saw as the major challenges facing the territory.

While much of the commentary was critical of the government's performance, people everywhere said they supported Nunavut, and remained inspired by the dream that had created it. Many acknowledged that it was still early days for Nunavut and that ultimately government performance would align with public expectations.

People were eager to point to those things they believed were going well. For example, people said more Inuit are working in government now than they had experienced previously under the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT). People who were aware of initiatives such as the Municipal Training Organization and the Akitsiraq Law School or who were familiar with the *Inuit Language Protection Act* often cited these as examples of what should happen.



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and people would participate in making those decisions and share in the responsibility for the outcomes. Many people said that this is the Inuit way.

Government spoke of this as wanting to introduce and weave *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* (IQ) into everything it did. Expectations ran high and many were impatient to make improvements in government programs and services of all kinds.

What people have told us is that their expectations have not been met.

Many said there is substantial poverty throughout the territory, with more and more people becoming reliant on income support. There is what many, including the Nunavut Housing Corporation, describe as a housing crisis, with the main issues being supply, overcrowding, and affordability.

People intuitively understand that nothing but a world class education system will give them the tools they need to build a strong society. But they believe what exists is failing most Nunavummiut, despite the hard work of many educators and the innovative programs they have developed,

We heard people speak critically of the government's performance in the areas that matter most to them. Many of these views were shared by public servants who expressed frustration that more was not being done. In fact, GN staff knew better than anyone the government's shortcomings, expressing deep concern about key but dysfunctional elements of the government's internal operating environment that need to be fixed.

## ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What follows in this Report Card is a summary of what was said during the public consultations. It analyses the issues and concerns consistently expressed by people throughout the territory and recommends further actions.

The Report Card also assesses the challenges faced by the public service in delivering the programs and services Nunavummiut expect. GN staff candidly identified operational concerns they believe, with considerable corroborative evidence, are severely hobbling departmental performance. The operating environment within government is perceived to be extremely troubled.

### Healthy Communities

Most people said issues such as poverty, overcrowded housing, alcohol and drug abuse, family violence, and mental health issues dominate the community landscape and are

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inter-related. They said the services available to assist people deal with these problems are inadequate and, in some cases, misdirected. A state of social well-being is not being achieved.

Our recommendations in this area are predictable. There is clearly need to invest more time in developing coordinated responses to help manage these severe social problems. In this regard, the development of an effective anti-poverty strategy would help ensure that agencies contributing to alleviating the problem are coordinated and help avoid unintended impacts of well-intentioned programs.

We see this strategy as a necessary step to ensure the cost-efficiency of actions taken to improve the lives of Nunavummiut. Working on a strategy should not excuse delays in feeding hungry children. This was identified in some communities as a major and immediate problem that, among other things, contributed to many children's poor performance in school.

Many people referred to the need to identify the root causes of the many social problems facing people throughout the territory. As much as it is necessary and urgent to deal with these problems, it makes sense for the GN to address the circumstances leading to dysfunctional and disruptive behaviour. People often expressed the view that many in the communities had nothing to do and are lacking purpose in their lives. Many lived in poverty and many more lived in crowded housing conditions. This combination of circumstances inevitably leads to difficulties. To address this situation people suggested that there be a greater investment in housing; in finding work people can do to contribute to the well-being of their community; improving opportunities to upgrade their skills and increase the range of options they have for work and; increasing recreational opportunities. All of this will help improve the social fabric of the communities and keep balance in people's lives.

### **Simplicity and Unity**

When Nunavut was created, people expected better interaction with government and that they would be involved in decisions that affect them. Today, they say that government has never seemed so distant. They don't know who in government does what, who they might call for advice or direction, or whether anyone will answer their phone at all. People said that citizen participation in government decision making was all but abolished when the GN first took office. They say they now have less information about government initiatives and fewer opportunities to influence decision makers.

People expressed a desire to be more involved in decision making so that the delivery of programs is more sensitive to their needs. Not only can this improve public acceptance

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of government initiatives, it can also encourage people to share responsibility for the outcomes. People who spoke with nostalgia about the ways of the GNWT, often referred to their comparative responsiveness to emerging needs and their encouragement of citizen involvement in decision making. People were expecting more than this from the GN, but say they didn't get it.

More than anything else, Nunavummiut said that communication with their government is very poor. They have little knowledge of government programs and services and many didn't know where to begin to undertake even simple transactions. They often said they don't know who does what. When they think they know who to phone: nobody answers. They believe strongly that general service levels have dropped over the last ten years. It is essential that the GN practices better communications in all things that it does and, further, encourages a two-way dialogue with Nunavummiut everywhere.

Finally, many community leaders suggested that there was much room to improve cooperation in the delivery of programs. They said that with the challenges facing Nunavut, the GN should use every opportunity to encourage all municipalities and land claims organizations to plan together more effectively. They said they believe partnerships produce the best results.

### **Self-Reliance**

People spoke eloquently of the Inuit tradition of self-reliance. Inuit have survived through the millennia in some of the harshest conditions on the planet. Everyone had a role to play – a job – in the family unit to ensure that all were fed, clothed, and housed properly. Today, Nunavummiut lament that few people have 'jobs', in the context and by the standards of the modern wage economy, while many others are bored and lack purpose. People described the alienating effect this has on their communities and the extremely abusive and negative behaviour that results.

Many people said that the time has come for change. Many employable people, already receiving income support, should begin a shift from doing little or nothing and feeling useless, to working for their community doing needed work. There is much to be done from cooking school lunches to providing home care for seniors; from clean up and recycling in communities to assisting child care centers; from reading to students in the schools to providing community hunting services for those in need of country food. These are important jobs to do in any community, and many suggested that it could and should be done by employable people.

Of course, the economy is more than the government. Many are trying to find ways to start private businesses. Nunavut's high-cost environment, small markets, and





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adequately do their jobs and there is too little training and mentoring in the workplace to make a difference.

People said they often had little job orientation when hired and are left to fend for themselves. Communications within and between departments is woefully inadequate; some staff found out about important government or even department initiatives through the media. Interdepartmental cooperation is inadequate and, in some instances, entirely absent. Financial management systems and reporting procedures are of inconsistent quality and insufficient to meet the needs of a modern government.

What is clear to all staff is that basic internal government systems must be improved for the public service to operate efficiently. Neglecting these needs will only result in costly, inefficient practices continuing to leave departments chronically unable to do their jobs. Internal government operations are in crisis and need a substantial tune-up. As one person put it: “a fully tuned up engine can take a car farther and faster on less gas.”

NSC believes the GN must act immediately in 6 key areas. It must establish long-term recruitment and retention strategies; promote a training culture to not only fulfill its Inuit recruitment commitments but also to recruit qualified and trained personnel for every position.

1. The GN must improve communications both within the government and with the general public. There should be trained personnel in every department dedicated to ensuring that essential information is known to policy makers and that the public is aware of government’s services and new initiatives.
2. Senior management must be stabilized. Individuals should be encouraged to stay longer in their position so they can shepherd long-term initiatives through the system. In the immediate future, new recruits into management vacancies should, beyond all else, be fully competent to not only do their own jobs but to also help mentor others. Great stresses have been and will be placed on GN senior management. They need to be well motivated and resourced if they are to perform with a high degree of discipline and competence that meets public expectations.
3. Departments must formalize mechanisms to work together more effectively. This begins with the Ministers and Deputy Ministers and includes key personnel throughout the departments at all levels. Cabinet committees should be established to coordinate and ensure the delivery of key government initiatives, with the involvement of private Members. A Priorities Implementation

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Committee chaired by the most senior people in the government should be established to ensure priority initiatives are properly resourced to completion. People have said that good government reflects team work at its best.

4. Departments must have the basic tools to do their jobs. Good financial information, such as reliable variance reports, is essential for anyone managing a budget. Given the challenge of vast distances and the operational complications of decentralized personnel, it is essential that internet bandwidth and IT systems are up to the task. These tools are as important to government managers anywhere, as a hammer and saw are to a carpenter.
5. Human resource recruitment and retention issues must be addressed. Some GN staff expressed concerns that non-Inuit people dominated the managerial ranks. Others stated that too many individuals, including those hired to fill Article 23 'Inuit quotas', were under-skilled and left to fend for themselves without proper training or job orientation. Not only were these people set up to fail, but admitted to feeling set adrift themselves. Meanwhile, the bulk of the workload falls to too few skilled and experienced people, many of whom have suffered severe burnout. It is clear that efforts to step up training and mentoring within the public service are an essential short- and medium-term goals. The long-term strategy should be for GN HR to work with the school system to recruit able and motivated people into the public service.
6. Decentralization was widely discussed and roundly criticized both within the public service and by the public. While many acknowledged that there was limited economic stimulus for some communities from decentralized jobs, the benefits ended there. Decentralization was often characterized as expensive and wasteful. Community people claimed that few local people were qualified and able to assume jobs in the decentralized operations other than in entry level administrative positions. For the most part, people from outside the community took the jobs and the preferred staff housing that went along with it. The anticipated benefits of bringing decision making closer to the people never materialized.

GN staff said that departments' operational decision making was made more difficult and convoluted as a direct result of decentralization. In fact, some decentralized offices have never been properly integrated into their overall departmental operations. Service levels to the public consequently declined.

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It is clear that most people would be interested in another operational review of decentralization to determine what can be salvaged through improved management information systems and protocols and what has to be changed. People said departments need to operate efficiently so service levels to communities can improve. The Millennium Report<sup>4</sup> found there are many problems with the decentralization model adopted by the GN. These problems have not yet been addressed.

### Intergovernmental Relations

The public's expectations for major changes in key areas of housing and education far outstrip the government's financial capacity. Much of what is recommended in this report requires superb inter-departmental coordination, good inter-agency cooperation, discipline, and effort. Long-term plans must identify realistic incremental actions leading to a clear vision. Even then, decisions about what gets funded and what does not will be very difficult.

It is for this reason that the GN should mobilize its efforts to launch major intergovernmental efforts on a national scale for Government of Canada assistance in three key areas:

1. **Housing:** Renew the major funding agreements that will pay for desperately needed new housing stock for the territory. Estimates suggest as much as \$1.9 billion dollars is needed to satisfy current housing needs. While the GN is responsible for ensuring that its systems are efficient and its housing programs are well targeted to meet the greatest needs first, it has little financial capacity to meet these needs without federal assistance.
2. **Training and Education:** Nunavut was created on the understanding that Inuit would assume a major role in running their government at all levels, with education services and training programs available to make this happen. It is clear from what many have said that this objective is far from being realized. Training programs for government staff who need them are rare and, as Berger reported, the public school system has much to do to prepare young people to assume highly skilled jobs. The GN must make an approach to the federal government for funding arrangements that allow for a more aggressive training regime within government over a much longer period of time than was previously contemplated at the time the NLCA was signed.

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<sup>4</sup> Millennium Partners – Building Nunavut Through Decentralization – Evaluation Report. February 2002. Prepared for the Government of Nunavut, EIA.



## **ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In analyzing the data from the public consultation, themes and trends emerged that were readily grouped in the same categories as Tamapta 2009-2013. The main issues of self-reliance, community wellness, education, and governance are intertwined in the story of Nunavut to date, and in the solutions moving into the future.

### **1. IMPROVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OUTCOMES**

Education, at all levels: Early Childhood; Kindergarten to Grade 12, Trades and Apprenticeship Training, and Post-secondary is a major concern for Nunavummiut. Despite the development of a new *Education Act* and many excellent programs and innovations such as a state-of-the-art teacher evaluation system, the development of a made-in-Nunavut curriculum, the Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy, and the Nunavut Teacher Education Program, the education system is failing many Nunavummiut.

Nunavummiut said that early childhood programs are severely underfunded and that day care centres are in disrepair. They want day care programs and improved day care facilities in every community to support the healthy development of children and to allow people into the workforce.

Nunavummiut told us that their public schools are failing to provide a quality education that prepares youth to move successfully into the workforce or post-secondary educational and training programs. They are extremely concerned about the ability of communities to be involved in the governance of education, the suitability of the curriculum, the teaching of Inuit language, the suitability of bilingual education programs, the inclusion of Inuit culture in the curriculum, high dropout rates, truancy, social promotion, the lack of guidance counsellors in most schools, and programs for children with special learning needs. They told us that many children in Nunavut regularly go to school hungry.

Across Nunavut, people emphasized the need for improved access to adult and post-secondary education opportunities, including life-skills, literacy, pre-employment, apprenticeship, diploma and degree level programs at the community level.

Experts agree. In a recent report, Justice Thomas Berger wrote that Nunavut is facing “a moment of crisis” due to the poor quality and inappropriateness of the education system. Berger stresses the need for a top quality, Inuktitut and English bilingual education program, more Inuit teachers and adult educators, improved program accessibility, and the need to link







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### 1.2. Language of Instruction and Bilingual Education

Many Nunavummiut told us that that they want to have Inuktitut taught well in schools. They want their children to be taught in Inuktitut, and they also want specialist teachers of Inuktitut who can help children master their language. In some communities we heard about determined efforts to recover and relearn the Inuit language. At the same time, Nunavummiut told us that they also want their children to learn English well, seeing this as a necessity for life in the modern world. We also heard repeatedly that Nunavummiut expect their Government to be able to communicate effectively in Inuktitut and English.

People felt that if the GN is ever to achieve representative levels of Inuit employees as required under Article 23 of the NLCA, and to be able to function effectively in Nunavut's official languages,<sup>9</sup> Nunavut's schools must do a better job of teaching both languages. We were also told that Nunavut's parents and families must do a better job of speaking Inuit language in the home, because children learn most of their language(s) naturally at home from parents, siblings and relatives: not at school.

Recognizing the need for more effective language teaching, in his 2006 Report on NLCA Implementation, Justice Berger recommended, "establishing in Nunavut a comprehensive program of bilingual education in Inuktitut and English."<sup>10</sup> The long-term objectives of this bilingual education program are two-fold: first, the development of the literate and competent speakers of both official languages that the GN and other agencies will need, and second, the preservation of the Inuit language and culture.

Both the new *Nunavut Education* and *Inuit Language Protection Acts* will set the direction on this issue. Both *Acts* require that our schools offer bilingual education programs. The *Education Act* also contains a number of measures to monitor their quality and the progress of children towards bilingual fluency and literacy.

#### Recommendations:

- 1.2.1.** Develop a carefully planned bilingual education strategy with appropriate curriculum and materials for each grade level as a core component of the made-in-Nunavut curriculum currently under development.
- 1.2.2.** Develop simple, accurate information on language of instruction research and the benefits of bilingual education in each of Nunavut's official languages, and

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<sup>9</sup> We acknowledge that French is also one of Nunavut's official languages. To simplify the issue in this review, we are not referring to this fact, because most respondents who raised this issue with us spoke only about the Inuit languages and English.

<sup>10</sup> Berger. T. Conciliator's Final Report: Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Implementation Planning Contract negotiations for the Second Planning Phase. Indian & Northern Affairs Canada. Ottawa. 2006. Pg 21-22



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disseminate this information to parents through information workshops offered in partnership with District Education Authorities in each community.

- 1.2.3. Provide each school with the human and material resources required to implement bilingual education programs.

### 1.3. Local Curriculum Content

Much of the curriculum and materials used in Nunavut schools is developed in other parts of Canada or other parts of the world, and is often irrelevant to Nunavut's students and their everyday life experiences. Most of the imported learning materials contain little or no relevant information on the Inuit culture or Inuit beliefs, values and social structures.

In many communities, Nunavummiut told us that much of what their children are learning in school has little relevance to their lives. They want to see practical programs and curriculum and materials that relate to the realities of life in their communities, and that include important aspects of the Inuit culture and Inuit beliefs and values, including cultural skills development and land skills programs. In the absence of a good quality, relevant for Nunavut curriculum, many teachers develop their own materials.

#### Recommendations:

- 1.3.1. Make resources available to District Education Authorities to allow them to develop curriculum and learning materials for local use and as supplements to the main territorial curriculum, and to develop and deliver realistic cultural skills development and land skills programs.
- 1.3.2. Develop communications tools within the Department so that teachers can readily share the materials they have developed.

### 1.4. District Education Authorities

Many Nunavummiut told us that the District Education Authorities established following division in 1999 have little authority and are ineffective. They are used to having strong input into the operation of Nunavut's schools through the Divisional Boards of Education that were established during the 20 years prior 1999. The divisional boards were very influential in directing educational policies and programs, in the development of curriculum and learning materials, and particularly in ensuring that each community could have direct input into the decision-making processes. The divisional boards also ensured that, collectively, parents and communities took shared responsibility for educational outcomes.

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The Department of Education provided ongoing training and development for the divisional boards and their members.

Immediately following division in 1999, the divisional boards were disbanded. Many communities feel that since the dissolution of the divisional boards they have had almost no effective means to communicate their concerns or their positions on educational matters to the Department of Education. Many Nunavummiut said that they had little input into the new *Education Act* and are not confident that it will do anything to enhance the influence of the District Education Authorities. They want the District Education Authorities to have a stronger voice and to serve as a vehicle through which they can make their concerns and opinions known, investigate new educational trends, comment on new legislation, and have an effective role in the development of educational policies and programs for Nunavut.

### Recommendations:

- 1.4.1.** Provide a vehicle through which District Education Authorities can easily communicate community concerns on educational issues with each other, and speak collectively to the appropriate departmental officials.
- 1.4.2.** Provide each District Education Authority with the human and financial resources required to fulfill its responsibilities.
- 1.4.3.** Reintroduce a training program for District Education Authorities so that they can become fully conversant with their duties and responsibilities, develop a comprehensive understanding of the Nunavut Education Act and its objectives, and learn about new approaches and trends in education.

### 1.5. Teacher Preparation and Orientation

In many communities we heard that Nunavut has a severe shortage of Inuit teachers, especially Inuit language specialists, and has difficulty attracting teachers with the subject specializations required to teach in middle and high school programs. Although the Nunavut Teacher Education Program (NTEP) is widely recognized for its success in training Inuit teachers, demand for its graduates greatly exceeds supply, and it produces few teachers with credentials to teach specialist subjects at the middle and high school levels. NTEP's early graduates are beginning to retire, and many others have assumed senior management positions in the GN, often outside of the field of education.

We were told that teachers hired from the south tend to be relatively young and inexperienced. Though usually well-qualified and enthusiastic, they have little understanding of or empathy for Inuit culture and values, an understanding that can take many years to develop. Most have little or limited experience of working in intercultural

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situations. Teachers complained that their teacher orientation does not prepare them adequately for the classroom, nor for life in the community.

The Inuktitut – English bilingual education program recommended by Justice Berger and discussed above, cannot be fully implemented unless there are many more Inuit teachers at all grade levels. Without a strong cadre of Inuit teachers in every community, the programs offered in Nunavut’s schools will never be truly culturally appropriate. A new long-term strategy to enhance Inuit teacher training and professional development initiatives should be a high priority.

### Recommendations:

- 1.5.1.** Require all teachers coming to Nunavut from other jurisdictions to take a comprehensive orientation program developed and delivered by the Department of Education, and to participate in annual refresher courses. These orientation programs should not affect the length of the school year.
- 1.5.2.** Plan for a long-term strategic investment in Inuit teacher education and professional development through:
- (i) the allocation of increased base funding that will guarantee the delivery of basic teacher training programs at the community level in each region of Nunavut; and
  - (ii) the provision of teacher education programs beyond the B.Ed level, so the Inuit teachers can develop specialized subject skills required for middle and high school teaching, or graduate degrees.

### **1.6. Post-Secondary Education & Training**

Many Nunavummiut told us that they cannot get the post-secondary education or training that they require to obtain meaningful employment. Although Nunavut Arctic College (NAC) offers a range of pre-employment, literacy, adult basic education, and certificate, diploma or degree level programs, they are inaccessible to many Nunavummiut because they are not available close enough to the individual’s home communities. For many years, Nunavut Arctic College had significant success in delivering some of its major programs in communities outside of its three regional campus centres: Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, and Cambridge Bay. People know this because of the success of those programs when they were offered in the smaller communities, and complain that today their Committee Learning Centres are underutilized, and that for large parts of the year no programs are offered.

Given Berger’s position that “education is the key to moving toward fulfillment of the objective of Article 23,” to significantly increasing the number of Inuit at all levels of the GN

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workforce, and eventually to Inuit self-reliance, there is an urgent need to increase the availability and range of post-secondary education and training programs and apprenticeships. These programs should be targeted at available GN and private sector employment opportunities in communities across Nunavut.

In 2005 - 2006, the GN developed the Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy: a comprehensive long-term plan to prepare Nunavummiut for the employment opportunities available in the territory. This strategy has yet to be implemented. In order to support its implementation, the GN must put into practice what it committed itself to doing in its Pinasuaqtavut vision statement: Make every dollar a training dollar.

### Recommendations:

- 1.6.1.** Fully implement the Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy (NALS).
- 1.6.2.** Establish a Training Trust Fund for post-secondary education and training in Nunavut through which training providers, including NAC, can obtain funds to deliver the training programs required to prepare Nunavummiut for effective participation in the workforce.
- 1.6.3.** Provide a comprehensive program of career counseling and planning, beginning in middle school and continuing through high school and college, to guide and encourage Nunavummiut in their chosen career paths. NAC adult educators, high school teachers and GN Career Development Officers can facilitate this process.
- 1.6.4.** When the financial and human resources become available, implement use of the Nunavut Community Skills Inventory System (NCSIS) in both school and college programs to facilitate career counseling and planning programs.
- 1.6.5.** Increase the availability of community based adult education programs leading to high school equivalency and of access programs to facilitate admission to vocational and professional training at the post-secondary level.
- 1.6.6.** Develop a broader range of opportunities for apprenticeships.

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### 2. REDUCE POVERTY

Nunavut has chronic problems of poverty and joblessness. Many Nunavummiut believe that the causes of poverty and joblessness are rooted in rapid, dramatic, and damaging changes to the structure of Inuit society over the past six decades. Addressing poverty in Nunavut is a challenging and complex task requiring several coordinated strategic and program interventions. Income support is one such intervention. It provides social protection to those in need, and includes strategies to promote community wellness and encourage self-reliance. The GN Income Support Program makes a number of benefits and various levels of financial support available to people 18 or over, and their dependents.

According to the Department of Education, the majority of households in Nunavut are welfare dependant for at least part of every year. GN statistics show that typically 50% of households rely on income support, with some communities reporting over 70% reliance.<sup>11</sup> Welfare dependency is exasperated by the extremely high cost of food in Nunavut and the inaccessibility of the food mail program to individuals who do not have credit cards, as is the case of many Inuit. In this environment food security becomes a serious problem for many households. Nunavummiut in several communities told us that children often go to school hungry. During the consultation people spoke of the need to ensure that the most vulnerable in Nunavut society are properly taken care of. Many of their comments focused on improving the living conditions of children and elders. People are concerned that children living in poverty are at greater risk of developing social, emotional, health, and educational problems as they try to deal with the stressful situations facing their families every day.

The Department also reports a significant trend towards more single person households relying on assistance with a noticeable increase in 18 year old clients. This is a trend that many Nunavummiut find disturbing because it suggests that the younger generation is moving away from the traditional Inuit value of self-reliance.

Collectively, Nunavummiut have expressed four areas of concern with the current Income Support Program and its delivery.

1. They feel that the current income support system does not provide enough funds or benefits to adequately cover the very high cost of basic shelter, food, clothing and transportation costs for the most vulnerable Nunavummiut (children, pregnant and nursing mothers, and elders) ;
2. They are concerned by the lack of opportunities and incentives for young adults to move off the income support programs and into some form of employment. In this regard they also expressed a desire to see social programs that expand employment

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.gov.nu.ca/finance/2009business>

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opportunities for individuals while contributing to the well-being of the community as a whole;

3. They view the seemingly countless rules and regulations of the Income Support Program, in conjunction with other government policies, as creating systemic barriers to getting off income support, and to permanently breaking the poverty cycle; and,
4. They also wish to see improved services and compassionate support for those who require help, and more transparent and consistent compliance actions to deter possible abuses within the Income Support Program.

Nunavummiut spoke of the need to build a social safety net that will provide adequate resources to ensure an acceptable standard of living while being more responsive to individual and changing circumstances. The challenge for GN is to provide a social support system that is fiscally and operationally sustainable.

### Recommendations:

Poverty has myriad causes, including employment structure, substance abuse, mental illness, family breakdown, and low wages in high cost regions. There are some immediate solutions that can alleviate the symptoms of poverty. However, attacking poverty and promoting self-reliance in the long-term requires a well-planned and integrated approach. This approach should be built on a clear understanding of the many causes of poverty and their relationship to each other.

- 2.1.** Immediately provide stabilized and sustained base funding for nutritious food and snack programs to ensure that children are adequately fed. This should be done within the school system by redirecting funds currently distributed through short-term grants from various GN departments for this purpose.
- 2.2.** Develop a coordinated Poverty Reduction Strategy for Nunavut to address the causes of poverty:
  - a) Encourage self-reliance by identifying work in communities that could be performed by people transferring off income support.
  - b) Support self-reliance by improving access to micro-loans and entrepreneurship training.
  - c) Strengthen micro/small business opportunities for success by identifying potential markets and helping entrepreneurs sell their products and services.
  - d) Review policies throughout GN with the intent of finding opportunities to support self-reliance and poverty reduction.



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Nunavummiut told us many times about the urgent need to reconnect elders and youth. This need has arisen at the same time that communities have identified the need to develop leadership skills. Developing the tools to encourage the dialogue between elders and youth, and to develop leadership skills in youth, will contribute to community wellness.

### Recommendations

There are many departments within the government where Nunavummiut feel that they no longer have a voice. The GN must recommit to a governance model that brings decision-making closer to the people affected by those decisions. Operationalizing this means delegating authority to local bodies that currently exist, or once existed but are now defunct. It is essential that the allocation of resources to communities and committees be fair. There is currently a disparity of resource distribution that favours those communities and organizations with the capacity to write funding proposals.

- 3.1.** Reinvigorate local health, justice, and education committees, delegate decisions to them, and resource them appropriately.

Nunavut faces a break in cultural continuity for the current generation if a dialogue is not struck between elders and youth. People spoke of their perception that elders are an underutilized resource, and that youth, without the benefit of guidance from elders, would move forward into adulthood missing critical understandings of their cultural heritage. Youth need to be nurtured, mentored, challenged, and connected with elders. Wellness programming can address this need. It is also apparent that in most communities, the radio is an underutilized communication tool. A network of vibrant radio stations can connect communities in their own languages and their own ways, across the territory.

## 4. HOUSING

“Nunavut is locked in a housing crisis that is worsening daily as the population booms and existing housing stock ages.”<sup>12</sup>

The Nunavut housing crisis and its causes are well documented. The consequences of this crisis include too many families being forced to live in woefully poor housing conditions. The destructive impacts of this situation are felt by all Nunavummiut. Intolerable housing conditions harm the health and well-being of individuals and families, and impairing the education and social development of Nunavut’s children and youth.

Nunavummiut spoke of the long waiting lists for houses, significant overcrowding, unaffordable rents, the poor condition of the housing stock, houses that are unsuitable for the elderly or

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<sup>12</sup> [www.gov.nu.ca/finance2009business](http://www.gov.nu.ca/finance2009business)



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people with disabilities, and new housing designs that do not meet the needs of communities. The situation is so dire that families are occupying homes that would otherwise be condemned. Home owners and prospective home-owners are concerned about the very high cost of purchasing a home, and the difficulties in properly maintaining a home.

People also spoke of housing policies and guidelines that stop entrepreneurship or act as disincentives to people re-entering the workforce. They questioned policies that allow staff housing to sit empty in communities where there is considerable overcrowding.

Nunavummiut raised concerns about the Nunavut Housing Corporation's communications and the completeness of program information. Some people are asking for programs that educate people on how to maintain homes, and for NHC to adopt policies and procedures that discourage tenants from damaging units. Local Housing Associations (LHA) also raised concerns about their mandates including concerns about unclear roles, responsibilities, and operational inefficiencies.

Since 2000, the NHC has been providing housing assistance through its various rental, ownership, and maintenance housing programs. The Corporation has introduced many initiatives designed to address some of the Nunavut's housing problems. The Nunavut Housing Trust Initiative is one example of a cooperative project undertaken by NHC and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc (NTI) to find solutions to some of the housing problems. However, it is evident that even with these types of interventions, the GN does not have the resources or capacity required to address the immediate housing emergency, nor the emerging demands. Without an influx of substantive new funding, the housing problems will continue to grow and become even more detrimental to the social and economic foundation of Nunavut communities, and to Inuit self-reliance. Even with more financial resources, the NHC faces a daunting task. While Nunavut communities are unique within Canada they are not uniform. Each community has its own character, priorities, and housing requirements.

The NHC is also mandated to ensure that all housing activity, to the extent possible, maximizes the potential training and business opportunities for the local community. The GN faces a formidable challenge in designing and implementing program interventions that will address the immediate housing crisis while supporting the development of sustainable economies at the local level.

### Recommendations:

Many Nunavummiut are living in precarious housing situations. A mix of social, economic, and program barriers are preventing people from solving their own housing problems. This situation will not change and will, in fact, worsen without significant intervention on the part of the GN and others. Nunavut has housing conditions and housing markets unlike anywhere else in

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Canada; simply importing rural and remote housing strategies from other jurisdictions will not work. The Nunavut Housing Corporation has used its legal framework and authority to develop and implement made-in-Nunavut solutions. The Corporation must continue to examine how it can fully use its status as a crown corporation to address the housing needs of Nunavummiut.

- 4.1. In cooperation with partners like NTI, develop a very strong communication campaign. The intent of this campaign will be to inform a broad and diverse audience about Nunavut's housing plight, and gain their invaluable support in securing additional housing funds from Canada.
- 4.2. Identify and remove policy and program guidelines that contribute to the poverty trap, or that remove an individual's incentives to become more self-reliant.
- 4.3. Review current communication approaches and materials with the intent of improving the public's knowledge, and the client's understanding of program guidelines, policies, benefits, and the client's responsibilities as tenants or home owners.
- 4.4. Provide support to local housing authorities to help them improve their capacity and to determine how resources and local issues can be managed more effectively.
- 4.5. Staff housing is a contentious issue throughout Nunavut, exacerbated by the extreme housing emergency in communities. Given the intensity of feeling and the many horror stories it is clear that housing, especially for GN staff, is an issue that requires more attention.

## 5. INCREASE SUPPORT FOR CULTURE & THE ARTS

### 5.1. Language

Despite a powerful mandate that captures Nunavummiut's cultural vision, and recent initiatives that include the *Official Languages Act* and *Inuit Language Protection Act*, the public perceives almost zero delivery by the GN. Across Nunavut, the fear of language and culture lost resonates with families, communities, and schools. People are frustrated at not being able to interact with their government in Inuktitut. Nunavummiut made it clear that preservation and promotion of Inuit language and culture is a priority. Nunavummiut are aware that each generation not immersed in the language grows further away from the Inuit culture and from self-reliance.

In some communities, Nunavummiut are facing a real danger of losing the last generation of unilingual Inuit who are able to pass rich vocabularies and traditional stories down to the next generation. Immediate solutions can be found among Nunavut's natural teachers and

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pupils – the elders and children. Nunavummiut elders want to know how they can work with youth. Children who learn the language bring it back into the home and schools.

The long-term solutions involve a comprehensive work plan that reaches into the education system, as described in Section 1 of this report. In 2006, Justice Thomas Berger explored this issue. It is clear from his recommendations that the required changes involve significant funding and support from Canada. Berger comments, “the only solution is to provide a bilingual system that works...nothing less than a new program of bilingual education starting in the pre-school years, and from kindergarten through Grade 12”.<sup>13</sup>

Nunavummiut said they are dissatisfied with the level of language services from the GN. Unilingual people report low success rates in reaching GN employees who could speak Inuktitut. These people often reverted to seeking assistance from an individual in their family or community and proceeding through a translator. For those matters where sensitivity and confidentiality is essential, such as in criminal matters, child and medical services, unilingual Nunavummiut had little to no language support. Many report misunderstandings about criminal charges and medical diagnoses.

Nunavummiut (both Inuit and non-Inuit) told us that they supported language training but did not have access to training through the workplace anymore. Inuktitut learning must be supported and encouraged in the workplace. Reasonable targets should be set for service levels in Inuktitut. There is a clear gap between government efforts in this area and the public’s perception of those efforts.

### Recommendations:

- 5.1.1.** Provide a 1-800 for real-time oral translation services: one for GN employees and for private business with direction from the Languages Commissioner and the Inuit Language Authority (not yet established).
- 5.1.2.** Investigate and remove barriers to recruiting bilingual Bylaw Officers, RCMP Special Constables and health care workers into communities.
- 5.1.3.** Recognizing that current levels of service are not meeting client needs, create Inuit language communications tools that are relevant and timely, which explain government process and contact information ie. child apprehension, common assault charges, etc.
- 5.1.4.** Develop and deliver a language training program for employees.

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<sup>13</sup> see David’s reference in first part. Same page.

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### 5.2. Markets

Throughout Nunavut, artists and business people voiced concerns regarding the lack of markets for arts and crafts, and the diminishing tourism industry. In addition, seal harvesters have been severely affected by collapsed markets from the experience of the 2009 EU ban on seal imports and the lack of aggressive appeal from politicians to the World Trade Organization.

There is an additional need for the GN to be educating the global audience about the economic and social value of traditional seal harvesting activities. Nunavummiut artisans stated they do not have the resources to focus on their craft and material sourcing in addition to how and where to market their goods.

It is, in part, the income from arts and crafts and tourism that allows people to make a living off the land. It is the sustainability of the harvest that enables Nunavummiut to make a living off the land, be self-reliant, and contribute to the cash economy.

#### Recommendations:

- 5.1.5. Task EDT and Environment with the responsibility to develop an aggressive marketing and communications plan addressing anti-sealing campaigns.
- 5.1.6. GN should take an active role in helping Nunavummiut develop the tools and capacity to engage in e-commerce for locally made arts.

## 6. HELPING THOSE AT RISK IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Nunavummiut told us that in Nunavut three groups are most at risk – elders, youth, and those with mental illness. The GN has a number of strategies designed to helping Nunavummiut at risk, including the largely unimplemented Addictions and Mental Health Strategy.

There is a crisis in mental health across the territory, evidenced by desperately high suicide rates and rampant drug and alcohol abuse. Nunavummiut told us about the growing incidence of mental illness in their communities, and their need for consistent access to mental health services and mental health care professionals including counselors and nurses. Communities perceive government inaction in the provision of mental health programs and services, largely because of the lack of mental health nurses in most communities. There is wide acknowledgement that an effective mental health strategy starts with prevention, and includes treatment opportunities close to home. Nunavummiut want to be involved in identifying and providing solutions to the wellness and mental health issues in their communities, and expect government to support them in doing so.

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By many accounts, the basic needs of elders and children are not being met. The Department charged with elder programming and services is perceived as being largely ineffective. A majority of elders are unilingual and face real challenges in accessing services from the government. Limited home care services restrict opportunities for respite for family members charged with caring for ageing family members. Elders' pensions have not kept pace with the cost of living in Nunavut. We were told that many elders are either confused about or unaware of their pension entitlements.

People in almost every community we visited told us that there is insufficient programming for young children, and too few daycare spaces. The lack of daycare spaces impedes some adults from pursuing training or finding work. Nunavut's early childhood and daycare programs are severely underfunded. Many parents who want to work cannot afford daycare and so are excluded from the workforce. Daycare centres in many communities are in disrepair. Nunavummiut want daycare programs and improved daycare facilities in every community to support the healthy development of children and to make it possible for them to take jobs. Preschool children need programming that will help them take their first steps on the path of lifelong learning, this includes nutritional programs. Parenting courses are needed to educate young parents about their obligations and how to cope with the demands of raising a family.

Nunavummiut are also vocal about their dissatisfaction with a number of other programs and services related to those at risk. Medical travel, sending pregnant women out of their communities to give birth, the lack of integration of IQ into child protection services, and the services available in patient boarding homes, are all issues that surfaced repeatedly during the consultation as sources of profound dissatisfaction. The source of much of their frustrations is either level of service, or communication breakdown. Both of these issues are entirely within the Department's control. The Department should consider establishing service standards, with associated performance indicators, for all of the services it provides, including the contractors operating the patient boarding homes outside of the territory. It is also apparent that the Department has focused its strategic planning efforts on those aspects of its mandate that deal with health, and has not yet developed strategic plans for many aspects of its mandate dealing with social services, where it is severely understaffed, and where very few services are offered. The consultation associated with strategic plan development will inevitably help Nunavummiut understand department policies and directives. At this point, it is clear that the lack of communications from the Department of Health and Social Services to Nunavummiut is the locus of widespread client dissatisfaction.

Nunavummiut did not often distinguish between the GN and Health Canada when discussing various programs and initiatives. It is clear that the programming framework between NTI, Health Canada, and Inuit Organizations needs to be finalized to provide clarity and accountability. This would overcome confusion about who is paying for what, and which

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government is actually making decisions. A more coordinated approach to funding could result in more efficient service and program delivery.

Nunavummiut at risk: elders, youth, and those with mental illness and addictions, need better services and support. This situation will not change and will, in fact, worsen without targeted intervention. It is clear that the GN has consulted widely on mental health and addictions. The Mental Health and Addictions strategy is comprehensive; it begins with prevention and includes treatment close to home. However, as a next step the GN needs to overcome the public's perception of its inaction on this pressing issue and actually begin effective implementation of this critically important strategy.

### Recommendations:

- 6.1.** Prioritize implementation of Addictions and Mental Health Strategy. This comprehensive strategy has a number of critical elements that should be given priority.
- 6.2.** Ensure that the Poverty Reduction Strategy specifically addresses an action plan for pension increases in high cost environments.
- 6.3.** Develop and implement a strategy that will ultimately satisfy demand for day care spaces and programming.

## 7. SUPPORT COMMUNITY BASED SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIES

During the past 50 to 60 years, Inuit society has moved away from a cash- subsistence economy. This transformation from a land based traditional and communal life style to an individualized wage economy has had some far-reaching social effects. During the consultation, Inuit spoke of how this change has altered the fabric of Inuit society. They spoke of young people losing traditional values and skills, leading to the development of poor self-images and destructive behaviours. They also talked about increasing levels of poverty and the breakdown of community cohesion as individuals and communities become less self-reliant. Across Nunavut people said they wanted access to more jobs, and better assistance in starting, operating and market development for new and small businesses.

Many community leaders raised concerns about the lack of infrastructure to support economic growth. They identified the need for facilities, better and less costly transportation, affordable energy alternatives, and improved telecommunications. Non-profit organizations, such as the Hunters and Trappers Associations, raised concerns about families that still rely heavily on the subsistence economy. They pointed that these families depend on modern equipment and tools such as snowmobiles, boats and gasoline, which are very expensive and usually require the generation of cash from other sources, such as part-time labour or seasonal work.

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In all communities, the GN is the major contributor to the local economy through its jobs, its purchasing, and its income support programs. However, Nunavummiut expressed an interest in helping diversify the economy through the development of a stronger and more vibrant private sector. Many people with an interest in entrepreneurship spoke of the difficulty in accessing relevant programs and in securing start-up or expansion capital. They said that in their experience it was difficult to obtain accurate and timely information and decisions from the Department of Economic Development and Transportation. They complained that the application processes for financial support are complicated, and that the actual requirements are unrealistic for most start-up situations.

Some business owners expressed disappointment with the GN's implementation of Article 24, the Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti (NNI) Policy. Small business owners felt that much more can be done with this policy to help support business startups and business growth, and that the application and registration requirements could be simplified. They also pointed out the difficulties of operating small businesses in a high cost region. In this regard, they are very disturbed at what they say is GN's lack of responsibility in paying its bills in a timely manner. A number of businesses complain of very large outstanding payments, some well over a year old. They describe how non-payment of these debts impedes their activities, and that they incur additional operating expenses. In some cases non-payment of invoices is leading them to consider legal action against the GN, and the possibility of no longer providing services to the GN.

Through the Department of Economic Development and Transportation, the GN offers business development programs, supports the creation of local enterprises, and offers job training programs all intended to improve the progress of local community economic development. The Department and its partners have undertaken considerable work in developing sectoral strategies that build on the both the traditional and emerging economic sectors and recognize the unique challenges of developing a viable, sustainable and diversified economy in Nunavut communities.

Many Nunavummiut feel that too many people are unemployed and relying on income support. During the consultation, we often heard people say that they would like to see those capable of work moved off income support and into the workforce. People made several suggestions on how this could be accomplished. One concept echoed in several meetings is to identify work in communities that is of value to the community and its residents. For example, there were several comments made about paying hunters to fill community freezers.



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### Recommendations

- 7.1. Facilitate the transition from dependence on income support into the wage economy for people who wish to move towards self-reliance and make active contributions in their communities. This can be achieved by redefining work within the Nunavut context.
- 7.2. Undertake community based consultation to identify and prioritize community based services that are required to improve the quality of life within communities (day care services, home care services, preparation of school meals, community hunters, home repairs, home construction, maintenance and care of municipal infrastructure, community beautification projects, wharf construction, etc.).
- 7.3. Develop appropriate modular, on-the-job training programs for each category of work.
- 7.4. Hamlet councils, NGOs, and CEDOs should work together to revise the community economic development plans. These plans will now need to include the development of operational plans and funding requirements to support and maximize the new approach to work.
- 7.5. Negotiate with the Community Access Program funders to ensure the maximum cost-sharing of these initiatives.
- 7.6. Ensure that the appropriate funding program is in place to aid in the transition from Income Support to work.

## **8. BUILDING OUR SKILLS TOWARDS SELF-RELIANCE**

Many Nunavummiut said that they want to work but there are many barriers to getting into the workforce, especially into better paying GN jobs. Some of these barriers include the lack of recognition for previous experiences, and the fact that many people do not have professional or standard credentials. In addition, we were told that it is difficult for people to gain work and volunteer experience in their community or leave their community to get the required credentials. Nunavut Arctic College offers a program that helps individuals develop profiles of the past learning, work experiences, and community service that might not have been credited or recorded. This program should be extended so that the College can help people in each community develop individualized experiential profiles that can be used in seeking employment or admission to further training.

### Recommendation

- 8.1. Extend Nunavut Arctic College's Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Program so that adult educators can help individuals in each community can develop PLAR profiles



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for the skills they have already acquired and have these credited towards further training that they might take.

- 8.2. Recognize and give credit for achievements and experience in community projects and volunteer experiences.

### **Business Climate:**

Most community businesses are small, and for many a large portion of their business volume comes from government. Overdue accounts put significant stress on small business cash flow. This can make it impossible for them to meet their own financial obligations to their suppliers and to pay their employees on time. Some small business owners expressed concerns that the cash flow crisis resulting from Government delays in paying their bills could force them to close their business or to lay staff off. Larger businesses that are experiencing the same type of problems have told us that they are considering withholding services from Government. This is occurring regularly, and is affecting both small and large businesses, including those registered under the NNI Policy. This practice is in violation of the GN's financial regulations that require payments within 20 working days of invoicing.

### **Recommendations:**

- 8.3. Ensure that any amounts owed by GN to businesses are paid on a timely basis and in accordance with their own policies.
- 8.4. GN to take all necessary steps to ensure that sufficient bandwidth and infrastructure are included in its redevelopment of its communication infrastructure to provide community residents access to a world-class communication system.
- 8.5. Examine the possibility of facilitating the development of economic incubator centres in each community that could provide space to entrepreneurs and small businesses.
- 8.6. Create a policy climate that encourages alternative, viable energy generation.
- 8.7. Undertake aggressive investment attraction to meet the community energy requirements through micro-hydro and other environmental friendly alternative energy generation projects.

## **9. ADDRESSING SOCIAL CONCERNS AT THEIR ROOTS**

Nunavummiut told us of their profound sadness at the cultural erosion, cultural dislocation, the impacts of a rapid shift to the wage economy, and dependence on income support. The sections in this report that address sustainable economies and poverty reduction describe

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components of a sophisticated approach to dealing with getting Nunavut back on track. At the core of strategies for moving forward is the redefinition of what work is. Identifying the root of Nunavut's social problems is important in order to understand how to address them. We believe that an important part of addressing social concerns at their roots is to provide opportunities for people to feel that they are contributing to Nunavut in a meaningful way.

At the same time that communities look to the future with ambitious goals about self-reliance, Nunavut's social problems continue as evidenced by an overstretched court system that has not kept pace with the rate and severity of crime.

Inuit justice is fair and timely. People told us the delays, sometimes up to five years, in being heard in court creates a gap that is too wide between the act of breaking the law and the dispensation of justice for that act. Long waiting times for court creates stress in homes that are already riddled with problems. The burden can easily become too great. Several people drew a direct link between waiting times for court and high suicide rates.

The lack of culturally appropriate and local treatment facilities is problematic. With few diversion options, incarceration becomes the norm instead of the last resort. Options like anger management, addictions treatment, and counseling services, as part of the broader implementation of the GN's mental health and addictions strategy, could create significant momentum for meaningful social change.

The GN is trying to deliver circuit court in a timely manner, using Justices of the Peace and video-conferencing. The impacts of these programs and tools do not appear to have been felt in the communities.

People recognized that the RCMP is doing its best in circumstances that are often far from ideal. However, they say there is a diminished level of policing from the RCMP now that the officers work in pairs at all times for safety reasons. We heard that community bylaw officers once worked closely with police but are no longer able to do so. People recognize that the greater understanding the RCMP have of Inuit culture and language, the more effective policing will be.

### Recommendations:

- 9.1.** Ensure that each community has a functioning Justice Committee by providing training and funding support.
- 9.2.** Establish more diversion alternatives, e.g. youth camps.
- 9.3.** Use Justice Committees and JP Courts more often to adjudicate misdemeanors and minor offences.

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- 9.4. Ensure that a culturally appropriate treatment centre is established in Nunavut.
- 9.5. Increase the number of Inuit working with the RCMP by re-establishing Special Constables.

### 10. HEALTH THROUGH PREVENTION

In its new Tamapta vision statement the GN acknowledges that money spent on preventative health measures will significantly offset future health care costs for the territory. Many of the strategies developed in recent years by the Health and Social Services Department, although yet to be implemented, contain commendable preventative measures.

People in almost every community told us that they are lacking recreational and healthy choices within their communities and are looking to the GN for leadership. There is a strong desire for community wellness programming, education, and facilities that will make healthy lifestyles easier to achieve and maintain. There is some momentum already in communities, but some communities need support in coordinating their efforts.

A holistic approach to improving community health through prevention means considering all aspects of community well-being, including a sustainable economy and support for citizens so that they are not oppressed by poverty.

#### Recommendation:

- 10.1. Establish Community Health Committees, or in the communities where one exists, provide additional support to ensure its functionality. These committees should plan a lead role in accessing resources from the above fund.

### 11. GETTING BACK TO BASICS

Throughout the consultation Nunavummiut spoke eloquently of their pride in Nunavut. People from all regions spoke of their continuing belief in the vision of Nunavut set out in 1999 – a vision that includes a government that incorporates Inuit values, language, and culture into its daily operations, and one that works in cooperation with the communities to help Nunavummiut achieve self-reliance and improve the quality of their lives. According to many Nunavummiut the Government is not meeting that vision. People told us that, in their opinion, things were better with the GNWT. They stated that they preferred the structures, systems, policies, and practices of that government over what they have now. The resounding message from Nunavummiut to their government is: Fix the problems.

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The Government of Nunavut is very young – only 10 years old. The rapid transition from the Government of Northwest Territories left the Government of Nunavut with significant resource and capacity issues. Senior managers identified many issues that are impacting the government’s ability to perform well: high vacancy rates, staff undertrained or lacking experience, systems not properly implemented, procedures and policies that are incomplete, strategies developed and not delivered, and a general lack of cohesion and unified action between departments. Employees across all departments said that this situation must be corrected. Initiatives have been undertaken to correct some of these issues; however, the consensus is that progress is slow – too slow. Employees pointed out that there is not a government-wide comprehensive approach to correcting these systemic problems. They are calling for a concerted and sustained effort to fully address the issues. Many employees believe that a failure to take immediate and coordinated action will result in an ever decreasing quality of service to the public, accompanied with spiraling costs. The resounding message from employees is: Get back to basics.

### 11.1. ARTICLE 23

Nunavummiut expressed their support for the objective of Article 23 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. They qualified their support with serious concerns about its implementation, particularly the lack of support that is being given to Inuit employees to support their success in the workplace. Many government employees, Inuit and non-Inuit alike, have commented that the timeline for achieving the goal of 85% Inuit representation within government is unrealistic and unachievable. Many departmental representatives shared the concern that they must continue to increase the number of Inuit within their department, even if it means recruiting or promoting candidates without the necessary skills and experience for the job. Many employees believe that the unrealistic timeline for achieving the goal of Article 23, coupled with the absence of well-planned staff training and development programs, and the perceived inequities in expectations of employee performance, has resulted in high levels of stress and tension in the workplace. They identified understaffing, heavy workloads, inadequacy of staff orientation, the absence of job specific training and development programs, and the lack of uniform performance management practices as adding to tensions in the workplace. Employees reported that the pressure of this situation is being felt by both individual employees and by work units as a whole, creating frustration and ethnic tensions. Employees are calling on their executive and senior managers to remedy this situation. They want to see performance management systems tied to their approved business plan. This item is discussed in more detail in the business planning session. In addition, employees say it is imperative that people be given the necessary training and professional development opportunities to meet the requirements of their job.

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### Recommendations:

- 11.1.1.** Recalibrate the timelines for achieving the objective of Article 23 to recognize the great need for training and skill set development necessary to ensure a professional and effective bureaucracy for the GN.
- 11.1.2.** Make it mandatory for all employees to attend orientation sessions that include information regarding the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, and Article 23 in particular, and review the expectations of the Government on such matters as absenteeism, hours of work, and performance management.
- 11.1.3.** Identify an acceptable range of proficiency for each skill set required for each position, and recruit and promote only qualified candidates, giving priority to Inuit.
- 11.1.4.** Develop aggressive training programs to ensure that all employees have the necessary skills to successfully perform duties assigned to them.
- 11.1.5.** Make it mandatory for all supervisors to regularly evaluate the performance of their employees.
- 11.1.6.** Make training requirements mandatory where it is necessary for the employee to meet the performance requirements of the position.

### **11.2. DECENTRALIZATION**

Across Nunavut there is considerable dissatisfaction with the Government's decentralization initiative. Along with economic benefits many people expected that decentralization would bring some decision making closer to home. From their perspective the economic potential of decentralization has not been achieved and decision making is still centralized. Some people are demanding that their government abandon the decentralization initiative or decentralize offices only to Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay. Others are asking for the GN to undertake a more strategic assessment of how decentralization can be made to work.

Many Nunavummiut are of the opinion that there was very little strategic thought put into which positions would be decentralized. As a result, a large number of decentralized positions remain vacant because of the GN's inability to attract qualified candidates to work in some of the remote communities. On the other hand, the level of qualification and experience required to perform some of the specialized decentralized duties are often poorly matched with the education and experience of the community residents.

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While there is support for the economic development objective underpinning decentralization, the general public and the bureaucracy both share a concern that decentralization is very costly and impedes some government agencies from delivering an appropriate level of service. The Department of Finance and the Nunavut Housing Corporation are most often given as examples of agencies that have become more ineffective and inefficient with decentralization. Employees also say that a lack of proper communication infrastructure and lack of financial and management information systems are significantly impeding the success of decentralization. They also point out that steps are being taken to address these issues, albeit far too slowly.

### Recommendation

- 11.2.1.** Undertake an operational review of decentralization to determine how the initiative can be made to work for Nunavut. The criteria used for this review should include:
- a) Service to the public
  - b) Efficiency, practicality, and cost implications of operating from a decentralized community
  - c) Economic benefits to the community.

### **11.3. BUSINESS PLANNING**

All GN departments are required to prepare and submit a business plan to the Legislature as part of the budget process. These business plans are intended to demonstrate how the department will meet the requirements and major priorities of the government, and outline the budget for the department.

Many employees commented that they do not participate in the development of their departmental business plan. The planning process is perceived as being top-down, and not reflective of the reality of their day-to-day jobs. A considerable number of employees admitted to not having seen the business plan or to not being aware its content. Other employees commented that the business plan for their department is not realistic and does not take into consideration the chronic lack of resources and capacity endemic to Nunavut.

Some employees told us that their departmental business plans do not identify performance indicators or performance standards for the various programs and business plans did not always provide an assessment of the performance of the organization against the previous year's plan. They believe that this presents a

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significant deficiency in the departmental planning and evaluation processes. Of equal concern to many employees is the government's lack of systems to track program or financial commitments. Employees identified several large-volume programs that are being managed through manual systems. For example, the Department of Education's Income Support Program disburses approximately \$30,000,000 per year using a manual system.

Employees are aware of the of the Auditor General's comments and reports concerning the GN's lack of formal financial systems, the lack of policy and procedures manual, and the requirement for training employees working in financial areas. The Department of Finance is currently coordinating efforts across departments to remedy the issues identified by the Auditor General. However, many feel that not enough progress is being made. Some employees expressed concerns that several agencies are not assigning the necessary priority to address the concerns raised by the Auditor General and others.

### Recommendations:

- 11.3.1.** Fully implement the recommendations of the Auditor General within the shortest time possible.
- 11.3.2.** Develop operational plans that identify the role of each major unit within the department in delivering the commitments included in the department's business plan.
- 11.3.3.** Identify performance indicators and performance standards for all major program areas.
- 11.3.4.** A performance management system must be integrated into a performance evaluation system for all employees.

### **11.4. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

Nunavummiut expressed their disappointment that Division did not include the transfer of fully functioning information technology systems. GN is directing significant investments to correct this issue. Providing government services to small communities dispersed over such a large area would be a challenge for even the most seasoned and well-resourced government. Equipment and systems are currently being designed and made ready to implement with the goal of having all communities interconnected to the new high speed infrastructure sometime in 2012.

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Nunavummiut spoke of the need for GN to provide itself with a far more powerful communication infrastructure. Many people said that they believe improvements to the telecommunication systems will help to implement better service delivery. The Department of Health and Social Services has already experimented with Tele-health. Employees say that this experiment has encountered limited success mostly due to the lack of high-speed infrastructure. They point out other jurisdictions have clearly demonstrated the utility and value of these systems. Other employees would like to see technology used more to support distance education and justice system initiatives.

Employees also raised a number of issues relating to the implementation of new systems. One issue is the length of time before new systems are fully implemented. The current timeline is subject to budget allocations and the availability of human resources. Employees argue that the benefits that will accrue to Nunavut from this investment are such that every effort should be made to shorten the implementation schedule. They also caution that any acceleration of this project will also require additional technical staff to manage the system. A further concern is that the current salary levels for these positions are substantially below market levels. In their opinion this is creating a major hurdle in the government's ability to manage the current systems and this problem will be further exacerbated when the new technology is fully operational.

### Recommendations:

- 11.4.1.** Accelerate the implementation of the planned new communication infrastructure.
- 11.4.2.** The GN should establish a world-class telecommunication system allowing for the development of Telehealth, Telejustice, and virtual education applications.

### **11.5. COMMUNICATIONS**

An overwhelming number of people are frustrated with the government's lack of service orientation. People expressed extreme annoyance with their inability to obtain or access basic information about GN programs and services. An example of the GN's inability to meet basic services is not answering the phones or returning messages. We frequently heard the demand for government employees to "Answer the phone!" Government employees also said that they experience the same frustration as the public when they try to contact other staff.

Many people said the GN does not communicate well. They expect to be well informed about government programs and services available to them. They also expect government communications to be easily accessible and up to date. There must be a variety of formats (on-line, audio, print, audio-visual) and a live voice on the end of the



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phone. Most importantly, communications should be in the language of their choice. When assistance is required, they said they expect to be able to speak with a person who is knowledgeable and helpful in addressing their issue.

We were often told that the quality of communication has significantly decreased over the past 10 years. Most attributed this decline in the quality of communication and service provision to the transfer of the Government Liaison Officers (GLOs) to the Hamlets as Municipal Liaison Officers (MLOs). This concern was often echoed by GN employees. We frequently heard from community residents of the valuable services that were provided by the GLOs under the GNWT government. These GLOs positions provided a point of contact for residents and greatly facilitated the day-to-day government services to the population.

Department personnel spoke of the need to be provided with appropriate tools in order to meet public expectations on communication. Many employees emphasized the serious need for there to be a communication specialist in each department, and the need for better communication tools, such as a proper service oriented web site, published searchable phone books, and an effective Information Desk. Representatives from the media are frustrated that Ministers do not want to talk to them about topics of legitimate public interest or about their own press releases.

### Recommendations:

- 11.4.3.** Refocus and redesign the GN's web pages so that they have a client service focus.
- 11.4.4.** Develop and publish appropriate telephone directories for the GN.
- 11.4.5.** Train employees on effective client service.
- 11.4.6.** Ensure that each Department has access to trained and resourced communication experts.

Community residents often commented on the importance of the radio to the community particularly in providing timely information to the residents. Several communities said that the radio equipment in their community is inoperative, poorly maintained, or obsolete. Residents do not want to see their radio stations off the air.

Many Nunavummiut complained that their MLA is not available and visible enough in the community. We frequently heard complaints that the MLAs were missing in action. Clearly, this comment was specific to some communities, as we also heard that some communities are pleased with the role played by their elected official.

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### Recommendations:

- 11.5.1.** Reintroduce the GLO positions in each community to help residents access government program and services, and to provide an improved link between MLAs and their constituents.
- 11.5.2.** Establish a service-oriented Information Desk for all of Nunavut, staffed by knowledgeable and multi-lingual people.
- 11.5.3.** Provide each community with state-of-the-art community radio equipment and ongoing training for programming and maintenance.
- 11.5.4.** Help each community establish a viable and relevant web presence with links to essential information.
- 11.5.5.** Encourage Ministers to talk with the media about key developments in their respective departments.
- 11.5.6.** Encourage MLAs to distribute newsletters or hold constituency meetings to discuss developments in government strategies and programs and issues relevant to the community.
- 11.5.7.** Encourage MLAs and the Premier to call community radio stations regularly with news and information updates.

### **11.6. GOVERNANCE**

GN employees told us repeatedly that there is often little to no coordination among departments when responding to major issues of the day or even when pursuing major initiatives of the government. They said that Ministers and Deputy Ministers wrestle with initiatives on their own, as time and resources permit.

Often initiatives, large and small, are derailed or deflected by emerging crises or by administrative problems which require a priority response by another department. At times senior departmental champions of particular initiatives are re-assigned within government or leave the public service, and the initiative loses momentum or simply stops altogether.

Many initiatives slow as departments wrestle with limited resources and under-trained staff. People reported that Ministers add priorities and/or change direction without knowing the impact this has on existing departmental work plans. Some government priorities do not get past initial planning stages as departments feel they can not invest scarce resources for long-term policy scoping exercises. Resources are often spread too

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thinly to allow significant progress on many cabinet priorities. GN employees said that MLAs will not know or find out that little of significance is happening until well after the time for action has passed.

It is apparent that Cabinet, Caucus and departmental heads need to coordinate their energies to maximum effect. Government needs to show focus and discipline and bring the necessary resources to bear to ensure that long-term initiatives can be advanced and that even short-term, intense, inter-departmental cooperation can resolve difficult issues quickly and competently.

People leading initiatives need to have sufficient support, both in financial and human resources, and need to be held accountable for results. Decision makers need to be aware of operational challenges and make informed judgments as to whether targets and plans are realistic.

According to GN employees, few people take collective responsibility for ensuring the delivery of government priorities, preferring to focus on their own immediate issues and providing informal commentary on the success or failures of others from the sidelines. A few stated the obvious; that this approach was a luxury that a small government with big responsibilities can ill-afford.

### Recommendations:

**11.7.1.** The Cabinet should establish a Priorities Implementation Committee chaired by the Premier to track and coordinate the major initiatives of government and to ensure these initiatives are adequately resourced.

- a) The committee membership should include the responsible Cabinet Members and their Deputy Ministers.
- b) The committee should have independently funded administrative support.
- c) The committee should engage expertise as required to ensure the successful completion of priorities
- d) The committee should meet monthly or more frequently as required.

**11.7.2.** The Cabinet should establish two sub-committees to coordinate and provide ongoing oversight of the government's action plan.

- a) One committee (the Self-Reliance Committee) should track initiatives that are primarily economic in nature and the other committee (the

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Healthy Communities Committee) should track initiatives that generally include social services and health matters.

- b) The committee membership should include the responsible Cabinet Members, Deputy Ministers, and interested independent MLAs.
- c) The committees should invite the input of independent expertise from time to time as the situation warrants.

**11.7.3.** The Cabinet should commission independent MLAs to investigate issues and scope out the policy options for pursuing long-term initiatives.

- a) MLAs should be provided with the necessary resources to assist them in their work.

### **11.7. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

All departments have many vacant positions that impair their ability to fulfill their mandates. Many civil servants said that the current recruitment process is too slow and is encumbered by unnecessary practices (E.g. the automatic reclassification of each position being recruited) coupled with understaffing and work load requirements. Recruitment processes are unacceptably long. In addition to this others have identified the lack of adequate and affordable housing as a barrier to attracting qualified candidates. Managers spoke of positions where the salary level and the benefit package are not sufficient to attract and retain qualified candidates. This is especially true for professional and technical positions where the market demands outstrip the supply. Examples of these situations within the GN include health care professionals (e.g. such as pharmacists, and some highly technical positions).

#### Recommendations

**11.10.1.** Train all managers on the operational limitations of the recruitment process.

**11.10.2.** Review the application of credentials in both the classification and hiring processes.

**11.10.3.** Revise the classification system so it is more sensitive to market forces.